



HRO News

*Give us 5 Minutes, and we will
give you all the HR news you need
to know now!*

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MCAGCC Human Resources Office, Building 1551, Twentynine Palms, CA 92278
<http://www.29palms.marines.mil/Offices/CivilianHumanResources.aspx>

Federal Benefits Open Season

Federal Benefits Open Season ends 8 December 2014. This is your opportunity to enroll, make changes or terminate enrollment in the health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance and flexible spending account.

You can make your Open Season election using the application for the specific program:

Health insurance - Use Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) or call the Benefits Line at 888-320-2917. You can access EBIS on the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) Portal at https://www.portal.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/Pages/EBIS_Main.aspx. If prompted, select your email certificate. You must use a computer with a .mil, .edu or .gov environment and your Department of Defense (DoD) Common Access Card (CAC).

Dental and vision Insurance - <https://www.benefeds.com/>.

Flexible Spending Account - <https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>.

Contact information for all the Open Season programs is available on the OCHR Portal at <https://www.portal.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/Pages/BenefitsOpenSeason.aspx>.

During Open Season the benefits line call volume is typically quite high. Please be patient and hold on the line until a Customer Service Representative (CSR) is able to answer the call. If you call after peak hours the wait time to speak to a CSR is shorter. Generally peak hours are 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. PST. Don't wait until the last day of Open Season as call wait times are historically longer.

EBIS Access for Open Season

Your EBIS password expires every 60 days, due to DoD security regulations, so you may need to reset it before you can make your election. You are encouraged to log in to your EBIS account today to ensure your password is current and you will be able to make your elections.

Follow the steps below to ensure your login information is working properly.

Log on to EBIS - https://www.portal.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/Pages/EBIS_Main.aspx

Click on the "Login to EBIS"

Select your certificate

Click Okay

Enter your Username and Password*

Click Login

*If you forgot your login, click "Forgot Login"

Click Login

Enter the information requested (Social, Date of Birth, Service Computation Date, Pay Plan/Schedule, Grade/Pay Band, and your Step.

Click Continue

Enter a Username and create a password

Click Set Password

(Continued on next page)

Once you are in EBIS, Click on "My Benefits" to view your current elections. If you want to make changes to your Benefits during open season, click on "Transactions" to make the new elections for 2015. Follow the prompts in the section (s) you wish to change

Thrift Savings Plan Enrollment for 2015

You can enroll, change or cancel your TSP contributions at any time.

The 2015 TSP elective deferral limit for regular TSP contributions is \$18,000 (total of pre-tax Traditional and Roth contributions), a \$500 increase from 2014.

The 2015 TSP catch-up contribution limit for employees age 50 or over is \$6,000 (total of pre-tax Traditional and Roth contributions), a \$500 increase from 2014.

If you want to continue your current regular TSP contributions in 2015, no action is required, but if you want to increase the amount of your contributions, you must make an election using the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) or by calling the Benefits Line.

If you want to make TSP catch-up contributions in 2015, you **MUST** make a separate catch-up TSP election using EBIS.

There will be 27 pay dates in the 2015 tax year. To distribute TSP contributions equally over all 27 pay dates, make your election during the period 30 November to 13 December 2014. The election will be effective 14 December 2014 and will be withheld from your first paycheck in tax year 2015, which you will receive on 2 January 2015.

Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) participants must distribute their regular TSP contributions over the entire year to receive Agency Matching Contributions each pay period.

Regular TSP Contributions:

There is no Open Season for TSP - you can enroll, change or cancel your contributions at any time. You can contribute any dollar amount or percentage (1% to 100%) of your basic pay up to the elective deferral limit. The elective deferral limit for 2015 is \$18,000, a \$500 increase from 2014.

If you want to continue your current regular TSP contributions in 2015, no action is required, but if you want to change your contributions in 2015, you must make an election using EBIS.

There will be 27 pay dates in the 2015 tax year instead of 26 pay dates. The last pay period during calendar year 2015 is 13 December – 26 December 2015. The pay date for that pay period is 1 January 2016. Since 1 January 2016 is a holiday, the pay date is 31 December 2015. Therefore, there will be 27 pay dates in 2015. If you want to distribute the \$18,000 over 27 pay dates, you should make your election during the period 30 November to 13 December 2014. \$18,000 divided by 27 is \$666.66 but you must contribute a whole dollar amount so you must elect \$667 to contribute the maximum amount.

Your TSP contributions can be made on a pre-tax basis (Traditional TSP) or after-tax basis (Roth TSP). The combined total of TSP Roth and traditional TSP contributions cannot exceed the 2015 elective deferral limit of \$18,000.

If you are a FERS participant, you will receive Agency Matching Contributions on the first 5% of basic pay that you contribute each pay period. The first 3% of basic pay that you contribute will be matched dollar for dollar; the next 2% will be matched at 50 cents per dollar. Contributions above 5% will not be matched. If you reach Page 2 of 3 11/24/2014

the IRS elective deferral limit before the end of the year, your contributions and Agency Matching Contributions must stop for the remainder of the year. FERS participants must distribute their contributions over the entire year to receive Agency Matching Contributions each pay period.

Federal Flexible Spending Account (FSAFEDS) Contributions for 2015 Increase

1. The Internal Revenue Service has announced the maximum allowed contribution to health care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) will be increased to \$2,550 from \$2,500 effective for the 2015 Benefit Period. This increase was implemented according to the Affordable Care Act which allows the election maximum to be adjusted annually for inflation in increments of \$50.
2. FSAFEDS will be adopting this higher maximum. This means you can elect up to \$2,550 for a health care or limited expense health care FSA during the Federal Benefits Open Season which began 10 November and ends 8 December 2014. The FSAFEDS maximum for dependent care remains the same at \$5,000 per household.
3. If you want to participate in FSAFEDS during 2015, you must make an election using the FSAFEDS Web site at <https://www.fsafeds.com> or by calling 877-372-3337. Benefits Bulletin 2014-6 Federal Flexible Spending Account Open Season provides additional information. The bulletin is available at <https://www.portal.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/Resource%20Library/2014-6%20Federal%20Flexible%20Spending%20Account%20Open%20Season.pdf>. If prompted, select your email certificate.
4. If you have questions about FSAFEDS, call 877-372-3337 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. Call Center hours on the day after Thanksgiving (Friday, 28 November) will be 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The Call Center is closed during weekends and on Thanksgiving. On Monday, 8 December (the last day of Open Season), the Call Center will be open 9:00 a.m. - midnight Eastern Time.

The TTY number is 800-952-0450.

You may also email your questions to FSAFEDS@adp.com.

2014 'Use or Lose' Annual Leave

The 2014 civilian employee leave year ends January 10, 2015. You are reminded that if you have more than the maximum carryover hours of annual leave on that date you risk losing your leave. The maximum carryover ceiling is 240 hours (with a very few exceptions for former overseas employees).

If you have more than 240 hours of leave accumulated and don't plan to use it, you can opt to donate excess leave (IAW regulation) to any federal employee participating in the voluntary leave transfer program. Please contact HRO for explanation on how the leave donation program works.

Workers Compensation for Supervisors Training

The focus of this class will be to provide a brief overview of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) and the information needed for supervisors to effectively and legally process claims for injured workers in a timely manner. There will also be a review provided on the supervisor's requirements for completing the CA-1, CA-2, and HRO Investigative Report. Other topics covered will include COP, work status, and light duty accommodations. This class will serve as a great internal resource for new supervisors, as well as seasoned supervisors, who are seeking to increase their knowledge of the supervisor's role in workers compensation.

The class will be held on 20 Jan 2015 from 0900 - 1100. To register, please click on the link below or email Jesse Silvas in HRO at jesse.silvas@usmc.mil.

<https://www.29palms.usmc.mil/base/hro/trng/default.asp>

Department of the Navy Civilian Employee Assistance Program (DoN CEAP)

The DoN CEAP program is a comprehensive employee assistance and work/life resource for DoN Employees and their families. It includes confidential assessment, referral, and short-term consultation for any personal concern. It also includes telephone and web-based services to help employees and their families manage day-to-day responsibilities and life events. Services are free.

24/7 DoN CEAP Assistance Line:

1-844-DoNCEAP or 1-844-366-2327

A person answers the phone, no voicemail or call menu.

Website: <http://donceap.foh.hhs.gov/>

Department of the Navy Civilian Employee Assistance Program - Webinars

The Department of the Navy Civilian Employee Assistance Program (DONCEAP) offers live webinars each month for employees. This month's webinars provide guidance on surviving the stress of the holidays and building strong workplace relationships.

Live Webinars for Employees – December 2014

Conquering Holiday Stress

What causes stress? Can you recognize your stress signals? This workshop is designed to help you cope with holiday-related stress more effectively. Learn strategies for minimizing stress and tips for balancing work and family during the holidays.

Join DONCEAP's live, interactive webinar on **Tuesday, December 9th, 2014 from 12:00pm to 1:00pm ET**. To register go to DONCEAP.foh.hhs.gov. Select employee or family member, your command, and then **Work/Life**. On the Welcome Page, look for the *Live Webinar* box in the right side navigation bar and click on **2014 Live Webinars**. You may need to scroll down to see the link. Space is limited, so be sure to register today!

Holiday Survival

Join this live, interactive DONCEAP webinar on **Wednesday, December 10th, 2014 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm ET**. To register go to DONCEAP.foh.hhs.gov. Select employee or family member, your command, and then **Employee Assistance**. On the Welcome Page, look for the *In the Spotlight* box in the right side navigation bar and click on **2014 Live Webinars**. Space is limited, so be sure to register today!

24/7 Assistance is just a call or a click away!

The DONCEAP offers 24/7 confidential assessment, referral, and short-term consultation for any personal concerns. Work/Life specialists can also help employees manage day-to-day responsibilities and life events by providing information and personalized referrals for child care, elder care, schools and financial aid, relocation, home maintenance, and other daily life needs. Plus, the program offers discounts on a wide variety of popular products and services.

Retirement and Benefits Webinars


1. The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) partners are offering informational webinars about retirement and benefits topics.


Registration information is available at: https://www.ltcfeds.com/meet_us/webinars.html.


Once a webinar has been broadcast it is available in the On-Demand Webinars section of the FLTCIP web site at


http://www.ltcfeds.com/meet_us/webinars_on_demand.html


Holiday Fire Safety Message


 The holiday season has arrived, and the time for decorating is in full swing. Most of us trim the tree, hang the lights and hook up our air-filled, oversized Santa, Rudolph or whatever else we have in our arsenal of decorations. Here is the problem; we forget that our old friend electricity powers most — if not all — of our holiday decorations. What we fail to realize is most outlets are generally 15-20 amps, so overloading them is easy. Overloaded outlets increase the potential for shock or electrocution, so here are some helpful hints to keep you safe this holiday season:


 Based on data from the National Fire Protection Association and the U.S. Fire Administration, an estimated 240 home fires involving Christmas trees and another 150 home fires involving holiday lights and other decorative lighting occur each year. Together, these fires result in 21 deaths and \$25.2 million in direct property damage. For more information on winter and holiday safety, visit the NFPA website at <http://www.nfpa.org/>. Protect you and your loved ones this holiday season!


 Inspect all electrical decorations for defects or damage. The smallest fray in an electrical cord can have devastating consequences.

 Ensure all bulbs used for lighting decorations are operational and in place. The empty socket in a string of lights exposes users to the potential of electrical shock.

 Daisy chaining (plugging multiple electrical sources in sequence) can cause electrical connections to overheat, resulting in a fire. Following the manufacturer's recommendation is the best course of action to alleviate the potential for overload.

 One golden rule to live by is to use heavy-duty extension cords designed to carry the intended load. Never use those light-duty cords — you know, the little flat ones sold for as little as \$1.29 at hardware stores. These cords can heat up quickly when they're overloaded and are not good for home decorating.

 Live Christmas trees require water to survive the holiday. Ensure your tree has plenty of water to survive and keep all open flames away from live trees.

 So, go forth this holiday season and enjoy it without the worries of an electrical fire. Remember, electricity is dangerous and demands respect, so give it the recognition it deserves.

COMBAT CENTER FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE, RESCUE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT:

TO PROVIDE AN ALL -HAZARD, ALL -RISK; FIRE, RESCUE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAM TO THE TENANTS AND OPERATING FORCES OF MAGTF/TC/MCAGCC